



LAC March Magazine 2024

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## Editorial

Welcome to LAC magazine issue No 35. The regular meetings at the Heneage and Rock Café have continued during January and February, all meetings have been well attended with the short events briefing at the Heneage coffee morning being well received. The show season is about to get underway and events updates are summarized on pages 5 and 6. The big news in the last newsletter was the decision to go ahead with an annual show, to be held as part of Grimsby Rugby Clubs Classic Car Show. We are hoping this will be our best yet with numerous stalls, BBQ and Rugby Club facilities..

Lots worth reading in this issue starting with an in depth look at the Rover P4 cars produced between 1949 and 1964. We have several of these gentlemanly cars in the club, they appealed to a discerning clientele in the 50s and 60s, and have a lasting charm all of their own.

Next up is a profile of Daimler's Barker Special Sports Drophead Coupe, this is a collaboration between myself and Trevor Marris who owns a pristine example. One of the most elegant cars of the late 1940s, early 50s. It was produced during interesting times both in the UK Industry and at Daimler itself.

The next article entitled "A Lifetime at Jaguar" was submitted by Alan Hill, it is his account of his years as an apprentice at Jaguar, well worth a read and an insight into working for this British car manufacturing icon.

Completing the main articles this month is Michael Taylor's Barcelona trip, a family holiday travelling through France, into Spain to visit Barcelona and return via Andorra. Beautifully written you can almost feel the sun on your back and the throb of a Perkins diesel.

Lincolnshire Automobile Club Presents:



Grimsby Rugby Club  
**Classic Car Show**  
Sunday 4th August 2024

10:00 to 4:00 - Cars in place by 9:30

GRIMSBY  
R. U. F. C.  
FOUNDED 1885

Entry Free for  
Classic Cars  
All Classics  
Welcome

Grimsby Rugby Club  
Springfield Road  
DN33 3JF

Bikes  
Welcome

Club Bar  
BBQ  
Stalls  
Best In Show

For further details please contact  
Brian  
07798710427  
brianking2016@icloud.com

## Welcome New Members

Craig Pick  
Alison Gray-Green

John Andersson  
John O'Keeffe

## Chairs Chat

Sue Peach

This is my last 'Chairs Chat' as I'm standing down as Chairman and committee member at the AGM in March, after 6 years. I have seen the LAC grow from the beginning, a small handful of people who met in a pub in Louth to a thriving, successful and friendly Club which still has plenty of drive and enthusiasm to explore, as well as share new ideas.

I've had many roles from secretary to social secretary organising mid-week meetings, outings and runs to finally becoming your Chairman. Over this time I've made new friends and met many like-minded people who all have one thing in common – that is to enjoy their cherished motors in good company. I'm leaving a strong committee team, a dedicated group of volunteers, trying to enable you to enjoy your cherished vehicles. May I wish them well.



I'm looking forward to the wide variety of planned activities this year including planning the visit to Wickenby airfield on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April at 11.30, their breakfast menu is only available from 10 – 12. Café 12 is based in the Control Tower, Wickenby, Langworth, Lincoln, LN3 5AX. The Café offers a wide choice of drinks, light bites and homemade cakes. I have reserved tables, requesting

them to be near the windows! Twenty two have already shown an interest, anyone else is welcome to join us but please let me know by contacting me on [peachposse@yahoo.com](mailto:peachposse@yahoo.com) so that I can inform the café.

There is a small museum in the Watch Tower, but unfortunately there is no disabled access. Plenty of parking is available just outside the perimeter fence to the Control and Watch Towers.

Hope to see you all regularly at the Heneage pub on first Sunday of the month or the Rock Café at Caistor later in the months in the future.

## Events - March / April

### March

#### **AGM at the Heneage Arms, Haintom LN8 6LX.**

Sunday 3rd March

10:30 to 12:00, annual reports and election of club officers.

#### **Rock Foundation Café , Caistor LN7 6RJ.**

Wednesday 27th March

Lunch out 11:30 for 12:00

### April

#### **Heneage Arms, Haintom LN8 6LX.**

Sunday 7th April

10:00 to 12:00, coffee morning and events report

#### **Rock Foundation Café , Caistor LN7 6RJ.**

Wednesday 24th April

Lunch out 11:30 for 12:00

## Thorpe Camp Drive It Day - Sun 21st April

Already booked for 2024  
Drive it Day on the 21st of April.  
Day to commence with road run.  
Start time 10:30 for 11:00 at Shell  
garage complex at Louth.  
Arrive Thorpe Camp at 12:00.  
For those going direct camp gates  
open 12:00 Camp closes 5:00

Rain affected last year but still a  
good turnout, plenty of indoor attractions and good café, great cakes.  
Please let me know if attending, need to give Thorpe Camp approximate  
numbers, [alanclassiccars@yahoo.com](mailto:alanclassiccars@yahoo.com)



## Looking Further Ahead

**Entry Forms have been emailed out for the following events:**

**Lincoln Castle Rally** - Sunday 26th May

**Louth Classic Car Show** - Sunday 2nd June

**Gringley On The Hill** - Sunday 23rd June

**Sandtoft Gala Day** - Sunday 28th July

Please send completed forms direct to event organisers. Replacement forms available just contact me at [alanclassiccars@yahoo.com](mailto:alanclassiccars@yahoo.com)

**Collecting numbers for the following events:**

**Gringley On the Hill** - Sunday 23rd June

**East Kirkby Show** - Saturday 6th June

**Boston Show** - Sunday 11th August

Please let Brian know if you are attending so that group areas can be organised [brianking2016@icloud.com](mailto:brianking2016@icloud.com)

## New Inn Saltfleet 2024 Dates - (Thanks Tom & Brian)

Popular Friday night venue frequented by several of our members last year. Dates and times listed below.

April 12th from 5:00 pm

May 10th from 5:00pm

June 14th from 5:00pm

July 12th from 5:00pm

August 9th from 5:00pm

Sept 13th from 5:00pm



# Events 2024 Calendar

March	Sun 3rd	AGM - Heneage	Members
	Wed 27th	Rock Foundation Café	Members
April	Sun 7th	Heneage Coffee Morning	Members
	Wed 10th	Wickenby Airfield Midweek Lunch	Members
	Sun 21st	Thorpe Camp and Road Run	Members
	Wed 24th	Rock Foundation Café	Members
May	Sun 5th	Heneage Coffee Morning	Members
	Sat 4th	Papplewick	Information
	Sun 5th	Caistor Market Place	Information
	Sun 19th	Sutton on Sea - Drive it Day	Members
	Wed 22nd	Rock Foundation Café	Members
	Sun 26th	Lincoln Castle Rally	LAC designated area
June	Sun 2nd	Heneage Coffee Morning	Members
	Sun 2nd	Louth Show	Information
	Sun 9th	Great Limber Show	Information
	Sun 23rd	Gringley On The Hill	LAC designated area
	Sun 16th	Cadwell Park	Members
	Wed 26th	Rock Foundation Café	Members
July	Sat 6th	East Kikby Show	LAC designated area
	Sun 7th	Heneage Coffee Morning	Members
	Sun 14th	MDCC Motorbillia @ Stickney	LAC designated area
	Sun 21st	Wolds Railway Picnic	Members
	Wed 24th	Rock Foundation Café	Members
	Sat 27th	Club Drive it Day	Members
	Sun 28th	Sandtoft Gala Day	Information
August	Sun 4th	LAC Annual Show Grimsby Rugby Club	Members
	Tues 6th	Fulstow Village Hall Classic Cars	Information
	Sun 11th	Boston Show	LAC designated area
	Sun 25th	Watersedge	Information
	Wed 28th	Rock Foundation Café	Members
September	Sun 1st	Heneage Coffee Morning	Members
	Sun 1st	Lincolnshire Wolds Hillclimb	Information
	Sun 8th	Minting Village Classic Car Show	Information
	Sat 14th	Grasby	Information
	Sun 22nd	Motorbike races	Information
	Wed 25th	Rock Foundation Café	Members
	F/S/S 27/28/29	Norfolk Group Tour	Members
October	Sun 6th	Heneage Coffee Morning	Members
	Wed 23rd	Rock Foundation Café	Members
November	Sun 3rd	2025 Events Presentation at The Heneage	Members
	Wed 27th	Rock Foundation Café	Members
December	Sun 1st	Christmas Dinner at The Heneage	Members

# Rover P4 (1949 to 1964)

Alan Bentham

## Introduction

After hostilities ceased in 1945 Rover like many manufacturers started production by re-introducing their pre-war range of cars. In Rover's case this was the P2 Rovers. Rover realised that this was only a holding position and the development of a new car would be required as soon as possible. In the event the all new car didn't appear until 1949, Rover filling the gap with the P3 Rovers.



The P3 retained the upright style and running boards of the P2 but suspension was now independent at the front with a coil, wishbones and hydraulic damper, both 60bhp (4 Cylinder) and 75bhp (6 cylinder) engines were available with an inlet over exhaust arrangement that facilitated efficient combustion chamber shape resulting in good performance and fuel efficiency.

The P4 was introduced at the 1949 Earls Court Motor Show, initially there was just one model, the 75, production was to last for fifteen years with continuous development of mechanical components and restyles of front and rear. Throughout the chassis and suspension remained the same for all models. Although a number of styling changes took place the central passenger cell never changed and first and last cars were instantly recognisable as P4 Rovers. Model designations were based on the approximate horsepower of the engine installed.

## Launch Specification 1949

The basis for the car was a strong box section chassis, suspension was based on the outgoing P3 design using independent front suspension on coil springs, wishbones and anti roll bar, rear springs were semi elliptics. The engine was a six cylinder inlet over exhaust unit displacing 2103cc,



with a new aluminium cylinder head and twin SU carburettors the engine produced 75bhp. The gearbox had four gears with synchromesh on 3rd and 4th, the Rover “freewheel” was a standard fitting on all cars and gear change was by column change. Brakes were hydraulic front drums and mechanically operated rear drums. Steering was by Burman recirculating ball.

Styling was heavily influenced by the current American style trends, in particularly the Studebaker car then in production. Front end styling featured a slated horizontal grill, headlights were recessed into square section recesses and a third headlight was placed central to the grill. Front doors were hinged conventionally but rear doors opened in the pre war “suicide “ fashion, i.e. they were hinged from the C pillar. The boot sloped downwards to give a rounded shape. Aluminium was used for bonnet, boot and door panels.

Internal furnishings were in line with expectations of a Rover car, leather, wood and thick carpet giving a luxury feel. Dash instrumentation was comprehensive with central speedo and four surrounding gauges, all placed directly in front of the driver. For these early cars instrumentation was displayed in rectangular shapes. A feature unique to the Rover was a fuel gauge that doubled as an engine oil level indicator at the press of a button.

### The P4 75 Cyclops (1949 to 1952)

The first cars produced to the specification described above were quickly given the nickname “Cyclops” owing to the centrally mounted headlight in the middle of their grill. The car was well received by both the public and the motoring press. Tested by The Motor in May 1950 they praised the handling, ride, refinement and performance. Performance figures obtained on test were top speed 83.5 mph, a 0 to 60 time 21.6 seconds and an average fuel consumption of 27.8 mpg.



In Autumn 1950 the dash instrumentation reverted to circular shape, the 15 bar grill was changed to 8 bar to improve engine cooling and the brakes became hydraulically operated front and back.

## The Three Aunties

Taking over from the Cyclops in March 1952 was a 75 with a number of improvements and a styling update. The styling update was primarily to the front end with deletion of the central headlight, the provision of a new grill with thin chrome surround and silver vernicle slats, the headlights now in circular recesses. At the rear the sloping boot remained but a larger rear window was provided. The principal improvement was the provision of “silentbloc” bushes to reduce noise and vibration levels inside the car.

### The 1953 October Motor Show

Major changes to the P4 range were introduced, the range was extended both upwards and downwards, the 75 was joined by the 60 and the 90 P4s. This three car range (the three aunties) became the core P4 offering right up to the end of the decade .

All three cars shared the same bodyshell as updated in March 52, the 90 was introduced to satisfy a demand for better performance particularly from export markets. The update in power was achieved by increasing engine capacity to 2638cc, the method used was an increase in cylinder bore size. To ensure adequate water jackets around all cylinders the bore pattern in the block had to be spread out, the new engine was therefore referred to as the “spread bore” engine.

The 60 was introduced to tap into the entry level market segment making Rovers more widely available. The engine was a four cylinder version of the “spread bore” 90 with a displacement of 1997cc. Both the 90 and 60 used a single carburettor for simplicity and ease of tuning.

In addition to the new engines all three cars shared significant mechanical updates, the column gearchange was deleted and a floor mounted gear lever installed, The gearbox now had synchromesh on the top three gears and the handbrake was relocated more conventionally to the right of the drivers seat (This last modification only lasted for 12 months when the original “shepherd's crook” handbrake was reinstated).

Rover adopted a policy of continuous improvement, in most instances the changes were revealed at an Earls Court Motor Show held in October each year.

## The 1954 October Motor Show

A significant styling change was introduced. Rover had employed David Bache to take charge of styling and this update was the first of his contributions, Front light positions were changed but more notably the boot profile was raised and a three piece wrap around rear window was added, resulting in a side profile that would remain the same until the end of production.



## The 1955 October Motor Show

Unveiled at this show were mechanical rather than the style changes, The 75 at last received the “spread bore” engine, this enabled an increase in capacity to 2230cc, the resultant torque and power increase allowing the use of single rather than twin carburettors.

For the 90 a brake uprate was announced, all 90s were now provided with a brake servo, the servo however was not compatible with the freewheel device hitherto part of the P4s standard specification. The problem was that in freewheel mode during deceleration no vacuum was generated by the engine and therefore no brake assist. To compensate for the loss of freewheel an overdrive became a very useful added cost option, indeed an option taken by most purchasers.

## The 1956 October Motor Show

Again a significant year for the P4 with a style change, mechanical uprate and the introduction of 2 new variants. Two years on from the last styling update another refresh occurred, front lights were again repositioned, the front wings were given a raised leading edge and headlights were no longer in recesses. Mechanical changes related to the 60 and 75, overdrive with brake servo became an option on both cars, when the overdrive package was selected of course the freewheel was deleted, for standard cars without overdrive freewheel remained and was to remain a feature right up to the end of 60 and 75 production. The two new variants were the 105S and 105R and of course shared the new front end styling change that had just been unveiled.

## Three Become Five

Rover as always were looking at ways to expand their market offering, the 105S was introduced in 1956 in order to provide a top of the range car with enhanced performance and improved specification. The 105R sharing the same engine was introduced to provide an automatic gearbox option to the range.

The engine was based on the six cylinder 2638cc 90 engine, the power uprate was achieved by adding twin carburettors, bigger inlet valves and an increase in compression ratio. The 105S additionally had the brake servo and overdrive as standard.

The 105R used Rover's own gearbox rather than bought in Borg Warner boxes favoured by competitors, it used a two plus reverse gearbox with power transmitted by torque converter allied to an overdrive unit to give more relaxed cruising. As with all auto boxes there was some efficiency lost resulting in higher fuel consumption, it was also a larger gearbox than the manual resulting in chassis changes to accommodate it making 105R expensive to produce.

The 105R did not sell in large numbers and was deleted from the range in 1958 after a production run of just 3,500 cars, The 105S remained in production for an extra year becoming just the 105 for its last production year.

One significant option on all 5 cars occurring during this period was the introduction of new duo tone paint schemes. Duo tone had been available from 1953 but involved just the painting of the roof section in a dark colour. The new scheme incorporated a chrome strip along the wing edges dividing the car more



equally into two sections. This option was taken by the majority of owners and is a distinguishing feature of all late model P4s

## The P5 Affect

Things were never going to be the same again for the P4 range after the introduction of the P5 3 litre at the 1958 Motor Show, the P5 was Rover's new flagship, a high quality luxury saloon, larger than the P4, styled by David Bache and using a new engine of 3 litres capacity. The engine was a development of the 90 using the same ioe configuration but now with seven main bearings and separate cylinder head and manifold castings, capacity was 2995cc and power output 115bhp.



The first affect was the deletion of the 105R, the P5 had the option of an automatic Borg Warner gearbox negating the need for another automatic Rover. The second was another re-style to enhance the family resemblance between P4 and P5. The remaining 4 P4 variants all received what was to be the last styling up date. The front grill was now recessed and P5 bumpers and overriders fitted front and rear, looking at the P4 and P5 side by side confirmed the strong family resemblance.

The third affect had to wait a year before the complete rationalisation of the entire P4 range. At the 1959 motor show out went the 105, 90, 75 and 60. The P4 range was reduced to just a two cars which debuted at the show, they were the 80 and 100.

The 80 was a four cylinder car using an overhead valve engine of 2286cc taken from the current Landrover , power output was 77bhp using a single Solex carburettor. The 100 used an engine based on the P5 3 litre engine with the seven bearing crank and separate head and manifold castings, it was in effect a short stroke version of the 3 litre engine. The capacity was 2625cc with a power output of 104 bhp. On both cars front disc brakes, servo and overdrive were standard features.

With the P6 Rover now in development these two models should have been the last of the line, it was however not to be, delays with the P6 gave the P4 an additional two years production, in the final two years the range consisted of the 95 and 110.

## Last of the Line

Introduced at the 1962 Motor Show and replacing the 80 and 100, the 95 and 110 were the last of the line. The 95 was the base model using the same engine as the 100 but slightly detuned, to further emphasize its base model status overdrive was no longer standard, it was however fitted with a higher ratio back axle, 3.9 to 1 rather than the standard 4.3 to 1 (the higher ratio axle had been available as an optional extra since the mid 50s).

The 110 engine was also based on the 100, but benefitted from the work being carried out to improve the 3 litre performance. The principal area of improvement was the “Weslake” cylinder head. The end result was 123bhp giving a top speed of 100mph, the first P4 to achieve this benchmark. During 1963 the Aluminium boot, doors and bonnet panels used since 1949 were replaced by steel items. The 110 and 95 ceased production in 1964, P4 manufacture ended after 15 years and a production total of over 130,000 cars.

Fast forward from 1964 to 2024, the Rover P4s are a popular classic, the combination of 1940s design elements such as the rear suicide doors, the shepherds crook handbrake, the adjustable gearstick and combination fuel / oil gauge combined with the leather, wood and gentleman's club ambiance all adds up to a car that appeals to the more discerning owner just as it did when current.

Survival rates are good thanks to that strong chassis and the type of owner they attract. They do rust however like all classics from the 50s and 60s so as always buyer beware. Prices are also good news with the very best just reaching 5 figures whilst a good usable example should be in reach for around £7500, buy wisely and you have a very usable car that you can be proud of.



# Hemswell and Stickney Autojumbles 2024

## Hemswell (aka Lincoln Autojumble)

Situated 15 miles north of Lincoln just off the A15 (postcode DN21 5TJ), Hemswell hold their autojumble the last Saturday in the month from January to November. Opening times are 8:00 to 12:30. A traditional jumble with a good mix of car, motorbike, spares, signs, manuals and **tools**. Entrance fee is £2 per car, classics are allowed through the gates to park on site. An excellent hours wander early on a Saturday morning. It of course situated next to the Hemswell Antiques Centre and a trip round several antique emporia followed by coffee and cake at one of the excellent cafes is a good way to complete your outing.



## Stickney

The jumble takes place on a large site just off the A16 coast road, immediately after the village of Stickney when travelling from Louth (postcode PE22 8AG). It takes place the last Sunday in the month from March to October' opening times are 7:00 to 1:00. Entry is free with classic cars in a reserved row at the front of the car park. The stalls are a similar mix to Hemswell, indeed being the next day to Hemswell many of the same vendors turn up at Stickney. Stickney is however considerably larger than Hemswell with a good selection of “garage clearance” stalls. After a stroll round the jumble a late breakfast at Langrick Station Café some ten miles drive across the Fens is highly recommended.

## Hemswell

Saturday 27th January 2024  
Saturday 24th February 2024  
Saturday 30th March 2024  
Saturday 27th April 2024  
Saturday 25th May 2024  
Saturday 29th June 2024  
Saturday 27th July 2024  
Saturday 31st August 2024  
Saturday 28th September 2024  
Saturday 26th October 2024  
Saturday 30th November 2024

## Stickney

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024  
Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2024  
Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024  
Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024  
Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024

# The Barker Special Sports Drophead Coupe

By Daimler 1948 to 1953

The logo for Daimler, featuring the word "Daimler" in a stylized, serif font with a decorative flourish above the 'i'.

Trevor Marris and Alan Bentham

## Introduction

The Daimler Company in 1945 was the car, truck and bus division of the BSA (Birmingham Small Arms)/ Daimler group of companies, BSA and Daimler had amalgamated as far back as 1910 after the original Daimler Company founded in 1896 had experienced financial difficulties. Along the way BSA / Daimler had also acquired Lanchester in 1931 and the coachbuilding company Hoopers and Barkers in 1940, both these companies becoming part of the Daimler group.



BSA and Daimler were to play a critical role in the production of arms, munitions, trucks and armoured vehicles during WW2, engine development work on armoured vehicles proving beneficial to the range of engines used in the first cars produced in 1945.

The first cars to be produced by Daimler after WW2 ended was the DB18 range of cars. The basis for the cars was a 9ft-6ins wheelbase chassis, complete with a 2522cc overhead valve engine producing 70bhp, pre selector gearbox, independent front suspension and mechanical brakes. The chassis was used for standard saloon, Barker drophead coupe and Hooper Empress limousine bodies, all bodies were coach built in house or at Hoopers. In 1948 Daimler introduced the Barker Special Sports chassis and running gear based on the DB18 unit but with several improvements, this was to be the basis of the Barker Special Sports Drophead Coupe.



## Barker Special Sports Drophead Coupe

### Specification

The Barker Special Sports was based on the DB18 chassis comprising substantial box sections and cross members with a 9ft 6inch wheelbase. There were however significant improvements in the running gear which included a built in mechanical jacking system, automatic lube system, hydraulic front and mechanical rear brakes, an uprated 2522cc overhead valve engine now with twin SU carburettors, aluminium cylinder head and a power output of 85 bhp, the gearbox was a preselector type with fluid flywheel. Most importantly fourth gear was now an overdrive ratio giving an overall gearing of 22.7mph per 1000revs (this equates to an engine speed of 2600 revs at 60 mph) giving the car grand tourer capability.

The thing that most set these cars apart was the styling, flowing lines on the long wheelbase resulting in an overall length of 15ft:6 inches, beautifully proportioned with an elegance that was missing from the standard DB18 saloon cars. Presentation in bright two tone colours completed the uplifting affect.

The coachwork body construction was aluminium over ash frame, front wings and window surround were of steel construction. The coachwork was carried out by Barker coachbuilders in house at the Daimler works. Barker were a long established coachbuilding firm who had been bought out by Hoopers in the late 1930s and had become part of the coachbuilding resource at Daimler.

The body was a two door three seat design, the doors opened in the pre war "suicide" fashion hinged from the B post, seating was two up front and a sideways rear seat. Comprehensive instrumentation by AC was positioned centrally, all dials were white faced. With leather seating, solid wood dash, thick Wilton carpeting , standard heater and a well fitting mohair hood the interior was a special place to be.



## Road Test

The Motor published their road test in the 14th June 1950 issue. The test included touring mileage in England, France and Belgium. The report was full of praise for the new car, with the following comments included in the report:

“A medium sized fast touring car in the grand manner”

Strikingly good looking and with a talent for rapid and exceedingly smooth long distance travel”

Performance figures returned included : Top speed 84.1 mph, 0 to 60 mph in 23.3 seconds, an overall fuel consumption on test of 23.1 mpg (including fast touring and performance testing), fuel consumption at a steady 50 mpg was 26.1mpg.

## Context and Conclusion

The Barker Special Sports was introduced at the Earls Court Motor Show in October 1948. It was in good company, the show included the launch of the Morris Minor, Jaguar XK120, Jaguar MK5, Aston Martin 2 litre sports and Austin Atlantic. The British Motor Industry were displaying their first attempts at postwar design after reliance on the re introduction of pre war models in 1945.

It was undoubtably the star on the Daimler Stand and one of the cars of the show. Never intended to be a mass produced model, it was severely affected by punitive taxation levels (66% on cars costing more than £1000). The actual price including tax was £2,560. Despite the high price it attracted a steady stream of buyers, 500 special sport chassis were produced



The 1948 Earls Court Show

however around 100 were used by Hoopers at their London works to coach build Hooper Drophead Coupes and Empress Limousines, production is therefore estimated at around 400 cars. Just over 300 cars have survived until the present day, a remarkable survival rate.

Over the four year production lifespan of the Special Sports Daimler were experiencing interesting times. Sir Bernard Docker had succeeded his father Dudley to become chairman of the whole BSA / Daimler group in the early 1940s. In 1949 he married Norah Collins the widow of 2 former marriages to millionaires. She became Lady Docker.

She immediately took an interest in Daimler affairs. She was appointed to the Board of Hoopers and became famous (infamous) for her extravagant lifestyle and her involvement in the design of show cars exhibited each year at Earls Court from 1951 to 1955 (The Docker Daimlers). The fortunes of Sir Bernard and Lady Docker became intertwined with Daimler, their downfall mirrored the declining fortunes of Daimler itself. A story worthy of an article all to itself and one that will be included in a later issue.

To conclude, an outstanding tourer in the grand manner, produced during interesting times for both Daimler and the British Motoring Industry. A very special car with a royal seal of approval. Owning one today is a very rewarding experience, the car has a real presence, it's grand touring capability when new still provides performance that keeps up with modern traffic on A and B roads, use for that special occasion, local classic shows and even for touring further afield, above all this is a car to be used and a car that will be admired wherever it goes.



**Rear seat arrangement**



**Beautiful Straight 6**

**Alan Hill**

**A Lifetime With Jaguar (34 yrs 7 mths)**



**Apprentice, Engineer, Programme Manager, Chief Project Engineer**

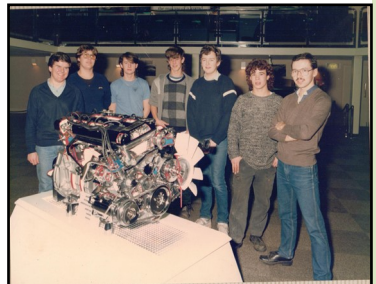
## **Part 1 : Apprenticeship**

3rd September 1984; three snotty nosed school leavers step off a bus on Sandy Lane, Radford in Coventry. “Where do you think you're going lads?” asks the union rep standing at the gates of the Jaguar Engine Plant, our first experience of the world of work is crossing a picket line!

That summer had seen the privatisation of Jaguar Cars from British Leyland under the leadership of John Egan. It was a fantastic time to be an automotive apprentice, a time of significant change in the country and industry. Every trainee still had to learn to weld, turn, mill, it didn't matter where you were destined in the company you still had to understand the engineering basics.

The training school was based above the V12 assembly line, it was a playground for us 16 year old kids who had spent our childhoods playing with tracker bikes and old cars. Jaguar Radford was still making the cast iron XK straight 6 engine, chrome plating body trim and was in the process of installing its first CNC robot facility for the new aluminum AJ6 engine.

Just down the road at Castle Bromwich plant the body's for XJS and XJ Series III were stamped, assembled and painted before being loaded into transporter lorries to be dispatched to Browns Lane plant the birthplace of every Jaguar for at least another two decades. As the end of my basic training drew to a close I was asked to lead a team of trainees to build a cutaway AJ6 motor show display engine, what an absolute honour. Next was to spend months experiencing vehicle build, again the timing was perfect as manufacturing transitioned from something almost unchanged since Henry Fords innovation. I can't imagine many people today can experience going into a machine



Me far left with the team of apprentices who built the AJ6 Motor Show engine

shop where iron dust and the smell of suds is thick in the air, or meet track workers with cigarettes hanging from their lips while putting pistons, and ash, into engine blocks.

From Radford, I went to Browns Lane to spend a month working my way along the Series 3 XJ production line; on day one I was told I would be on exhaust fit, “but I have to experience the whole line” I naively said, I was given a quick tour for this “experience” then returned to my base - to make fishing tackle! In those days almost every workstation had a shop associated with it, you could buy pretty much anything on the Browns Lane tracks.



As a technical apprentice I was assigned my first work placement and had a training programme based on where I would actually work. I was assigned to Exhaust Design, after a few weeks of drafting exhaust layouts on full vehicle size drawing boards I knew this wasn't for me. The first of many chance conversations in my career led to the first change in my career path.

I moved to Brakes Development which sounded far more exciting, but also included driver controls - and the rod and cable throttle actuation system of the V12 engine which I now found myself responsible for, fitting the V12 engine in the XJS was a work of art and a nightmare for every under bonnet engineer. Next stop was the J-Gate gear lever for the new XJ, the first “XJ40” prototype had a new fangled wiring system - multiplex - but the one's and zero's didn't quite know where they were supposed to go, so pressing the window switch squashed me up against the steering wheel.

And then I had my driving test, in a Mini! “Did you pass?” I was asked as I got back into the office, “Yes”, I was handed a set of keys and asked to take a car to MIRA (the Motor Industry Research Association near Nuneaton). My first experience of driving a Jaguar was a left hand drive V12 XJS, within a mile I had spun it! I still find it astonishing how blasé things could be. But the spell was cast - a Jaguar is a special beast to drive. As an 18 year old being a Jaguar Brakes Engineer was a dream job, usually... We

didn't yet have computers to acquire test data, so the apprentice had the job of prepping cars and collecting data manually. We were also still updating from BL imperial standards to metric ones, which brought its own hazards. I recall being dispatched to MIRA with a late Series 3 XJ and told to load it to GVW (maximum Gross Vehicle Weight), which I was told was 4000 kilograms, the workshop fitters checked I had that right - "yes it's in the standard". So I loaded five 70kg test dummies, then filled the footwells and boot with weights, put it on the scales and it was still way off. Now the "left handed screwdriver" moment truly started, the fitters gave me advice on where I could add sandbags - on the boot, bonnet, roof, still not there, the panels were buckling, the car wouldn't move and the laughter started. The error gradually dawned on me but not before the whole team were spectating as this apprentice learnt a life lesson - it should have been 4000 lbs, less than half the load I'd subjected this poor car to.

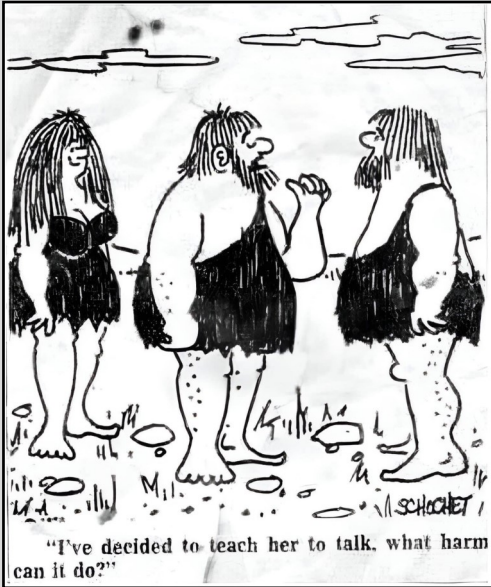
More seriously ensuring prototype cars were correctly set up for tests was a key responsibility during my apprenticeship. One of the key sign offs for a cars brakes is the "Fade Test". 20 repeated stops, for each stop the pressure and temperature for each disc had to be recorded, as well as brake line pressure and time to stop. But as I said, we didn't have computerised data recorders - so guess who had to write down twenty sets of data , while being accelerated to 100mph and then stopping as quickly as possible, 20 times around the MIRA high speed banking, while brake fumes filled the car. It was a bit of a right of passage for test engineers to complete the data collection without being ill.

A final anecdote from my apprenticeship, was the weekend I was asked to support an ABS rework of 20 XJS. The cars came off the production line with just enough fuel, so after the rework I had to top up the fuel. At that time we only built petrol cars, so I just topped up at the first pump and drove the 100m back to post-build. On Monday there were 20 cars that wouldn't start, an investigation found diesel contamination. Whoops, I fessed up, expecting the worst, but it was just another lesson learned; and didn't stop me being awarded Apprentice of the Year and rewarded with a trip to Mahwah, New Jersey the Jaguar North America HQ.



An awesome fleet of cars for a teenage engineer to learn his craft on.

# Smile Time



## To Barcelona and Back

Michael Taylor

### France

I spent the 1990s teaching in a village school in the Lincolnshire Fenland, bringing up a young family. Holidays were motoring tours of Europe in a car filled with family and camping gear, as often as not with a boat strapped to the roof. This was made possible because I bought a 3 year old Rover Montego Estate for the princely sum of £4300 cash.



The Austin Montego was made by British Leyland from 1984 to 1988. It was rebadged as a Rover from 1988 until production ceased in 1995. The Montego replaced the rear wheel drive Morris Ital and the front wheel drive Austin Ambassador. It was the intended competitor for the Ford Sierra and the Vauxhall Cavalier. Mine had a voluminous carrying capacity and a plucky 2 Litre Perkins diesel engine. In the final year of production, a *What Car* article opined: “Austin Rover’s once great white hope, Montego matured into a very decent car – but nobody noticed.” The Montego was the final car to be launched under the Austin marque, the Austin name was then no more.

We piled into the packed fun mobile one sunny morning in late July, playing cassette pop compilations (remember those?) and headed for the Channel Tunnel. While we waited for our Euro train we decided that it would be a good idea to find a phone and arrange travel insurance. The journey under the sea was not exactly luxurious, but it only took just over half an hour and we were off again, bowling down the autoroute towards Paris. All went well at first. That is until we came to a juddering halt. I can’t remember exactly what the problem was, but I do recall that it was a fuel issue and I managed to get us going again with the liberal application of gaffer tape.

We limped down a nearby slip road, making it to a small town square,



finding the local garage. The owner assured us that he would have it fixed by the next day and pointed us towards the hotel across the way. Once the hotel manageress realized that this was an insurance job, we were given the best family room in the place and she phoned the Relais Routier across the way and booked us all dinner from the expensive menu. Next morning, after a breakfast of toast and apricot jam with bowls of hot chocolate, we picked up the car and were soon on our way.

We swung well to the east of Paris, passing by Amiens and Reims, before our trusty Michelin Guide to Camping France showed us to a pleasant, rural campsite north of Troyes. On the third day, we reached our first destination, the small village of Gacogne, in the Morvan national park, an hour or so west of Dijon, where my wife's sister owned a holiday cottage. I popped in to the Auberge and paid for meals at the fete later. We had a lovely supper in the square, of frites and steak hache, with a great big jug of the local fruity, Burgundy wine on that balmy summer evening.



Gascogne Auberge

Early next morning, I set off on the house moped (a Suzuki 50) for the nearby village of Brassy, where there was a boulangerie, for fresh breakfast baguettes. I was tootling along a lane in the forest, when a wild boar came crashing out of the undergrowth, on to the road! It stood rigid, staring at me. I braked and stared back. For a few moments, it was like “High Noon”, then it just careered off again.

After several days of forest walks and picnics, we were on our way again south. We passed Moulins and Saint-Pourcain, finding a pleasant Camping

## Spain

The next morning we packed and climbed the steep Pyrenean pass road to cross the border into Spain at Le Perthus border post. Then down, down and along to the city of Girona, where we halted and found a Tourist Information Centre. The staff, who thankfully spoke English (our French was of no use here) told us that there was an attractive campsite at nearby Fornells de la Selva.

After establishing our camp, I was chatting to the owner, a distinguished – looking bearded patriarch. I mentioned how wonderful it felt to visit Spain, as I have some Spanish ancestry. He replied darkly, that we were not in Spain – this was Catalonia! Right then, it’s the Welsh/English thing. Doesn’t anybody like the next place? That evening, we had our meal in the village bar: Catalan omelette. I asked the waitress what’s the difference between this and Spanish omelette? “This one’s made in Catalonia,” she replied.

Deciding to have a day in Barcelona, we headed south again. I was surprised that the terrain was rocky desert, with the odd large cactus, but then, this is where they filmed those spaghetti westerns. Perhaps they should have been called paella westerns? Barcelona city centre is down in a natural bowl, surrounded by a number of hills – like Rome... or indeed Sheffield! This is the most beautiful city that I have ever experienced. As well as the world famous cathedral, there are many gorgeous domestic buildings designed by the Catalan modernist architect Antoni Gaudi. We parked up on a hilltop outside the Olympic stadium, built for the unsuccessful bid to host the 1936 Olympic Games. It did, however, host the 1992 Summer Olympics. No one was around, so we had a little tour. The entrance facade was like a film set – the great columns weren’t load bearing. The whole stone frontage was attached to an enormous steel girder framework. The terraces gave us a wonderful panoramic vista of the entire city laid before us: the port to the south and the city wrapped around the rest.

The drivers of Barcelona were the worst that I’ve ever encountered. I’ve driven through Paris a few times and quite a lot in London, but this was the premier league! Every car seemed to have dings. They all



Olympic Stadium



Casa Batlló



Cathedral

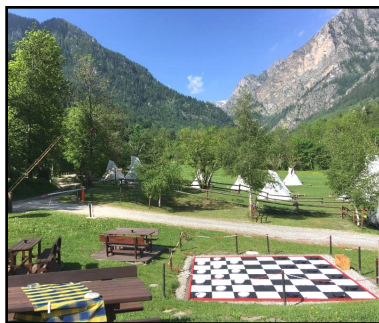
drove like boy racers, not giving way to anyone. I must have driven around the big roundabout in the city centre half a dozen times, before I managed to force my way to the outer lane and turn off north.

## Andorra

After a few more days spent exploring rock pools and playing on quiet beaches, away from the crowded resorts of the Costa Brava, we decided to head west and north to the tiny principality of Andorra. The only way by road from the Spanish side was through a tunnel in the mountain. Andorra turned out to be basically a town called Andorra la Vella in a high valley, nestling among jagged, snow clad peaks, even in August. We managed to find a site outside the town and set up camp. The next day, we motored down into town to explore. What we found was an all year round ski resort for the well heeled, full of shopping opportunities for the wealthy, so not really geared for young families on a camping tour. However, everything seemed to be duty free, so we stocked up on wine and rum!



Andorra La Vella



Andorra Campsite

After spending a second night, we packed and headed north, back to France. The only way out north in those days, was El Pas de la Casa, at 7900 ft, it was the highest pass on the European network of roads. We wound around hairpin bend after hairpin bend. Finally, at the summit border we stopped to stretch our legs and breathe in the cool, thin mountain air. The steadfast Perkins engine had coped with its greatest challenge just fine.

Just five minutes later, we were away again back down into France. We passed by Ax-les-Thermes, Carcassonne, Albi, back to Clermont- Ferrand and the now familiar road back to the cottage at Gacogne, where we would spend a few days before the trek back to our Lincolnshire home.



Spain Andorra Border

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